

Boating & Fishing

update '07



State Senator

Ron Jelinek

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Dear Friend:

With over 11,000 inland lakes, thousands of miles of rivers and streams, and shoreline on four of the five Great Lakes, there's no better place to spend a Michigan summer than on the water! Fun and adventure are close at hand - whether you love to boat, fish, sail, canoe, kayak, ski or just enjoy nature.

Before you and your family head to the shore, I wanted to send along some information of interest to boaters and anglers. Along with a legislative report, this newsletter provides important news on potential threats to our water resources, some safety tips, and a helpful resource guide. I hope you find it informative.

As always, your comments and suggestions on ways to preserve Michigan's outdoor heritage are most welcome. I look forward to hearing from you. Have a great summer on the water!

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Jelinek".

Ron Jelinek
State Senator
21st District





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New Boating Safety Certificate Requirements

Operators must carry their boating safety certificate and display it if asked by a peace officer. To operate a personal watercraft in Michigan the following requirements apply:

- Anyone born after Dec. 31, 1978 cannot operate a personal watercraft unless they obtain a boating safety certificate.
- You must be at least 14 years to operate a personal watercraft.
- Children ages 12 and 13 may operate a personal watercraft if:
 - They are accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.
 - The child and adult both have a boating safety certificate.
 - The personal watercraft is equipped with a lanyard-type engine cutoff switch that is attached to the adult.

The Department of State provides a safe boating booklet through its branch offices. The guide is free and has information about boating basics, laws and safety.

Residents interested in taking a boating safety course should check with the following sources for more information:

- U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary at <http://nws.cgaux.org/>, (800) 336-BOAT; (336-2628 for the BoatU.S. boating safety course hot line.)
- U.S. Power Squadron at www.usps.org/
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources at www.michigan.gov/dnr.
- County Sheriff's Office.
- Community schools and colleges.
- Marinas and boat dealers.

SAFE BOATING – rules on the water

- 1. Wear Your Life Jacket.** Always. The U.S. Coast Guard reports that 87 percent of those who drown while boating are not wearing a life jacket. The number one precaution boaters can take to stay safe on the water is to wear a life preserver.
- 2. Stay Sober.** It is illegal to operate a boat or personal watercraft under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Alcohol is a factor in one third of all recreational boating fatalities.
- 3. Maintain a Safe Speed and Stay Alert.** Most boating accidents are caused by operator errors. Be ready for other boats, swimmers, skiers or shallow waters.
- 4. Keep your Boat in Safe Working Order.** Make sure your craft meets state and federal requirements and is properly equipped. Request a Vessel Safety Check at: www.vesselsafetycheck.org.
- 5. File a Float Plan.** Let someone on shore know where you're going and when you plan to return.

Check the Handbook of Michigan Boating Laws and Responsibilities to stay on top of Michigan boating rules and regulations. Access it online at www.boat-ed.com/mi/handbook/.





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New THREAT to fish in Great Lakes

A new contagious disease, Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) virus, is on the move in the Great Lakes. VHS has already caused fish mortalities in Lakes St. Clair, Erie, Ontario and Huron, and the Wisconsin DNR recently reported that VHS has spread into Lake Michigan. Officials have also confirmed the virus has moved inland as a large fish die-off in Budd Lake in Clare County was determined to be the result of a VHS outbreak. The virus does not affect humans in any way.

To help slow the spread of the disease and protect the state's fish hatcheries, the DNR has put a one-year moratorium on walleye, northern pike and muskellunge production and stocking. In addition, the DNR has issued a draft order restricting live bait. If approved by the Natural Resources Commission, the new rules would become effective June 28.

Anglers can keep up-to-date on the live bait restrictions, or report sick fish or fish kill at www.michigan.gov/dnrfishing. Signs of VHS to look for include: hemorrhaging in the skin, multiple hemorrhages on the liver, spleen or intestines, or hemorrhages on the swim bladder.

Officials suspect the disease entered Michigan waters from the Maritime Region of Canada, likely in the discharge of infected ballast water from cargo ships.

Find the perfect site

With access to four of the five Great Lakes and thousands of inland lakes, there are plenty of water resources to discover in Michigan. Boaters can launch their adventures from over 1,300 public boating access sites and over 90 public harbors and marinas. Visit the Michigan Recreational Boating Information System web site at www.mcgi.state.mi.us/MRBIS/ to plan your next outing. Search by distance, body of water, county, even by fish species! Facility and site information include amenities, fees, and rules. Some harbor sites include a link to online reservations.

Boaters and anglers can help control ANS

Aquatic nuisance species (ANS) are the number one threat facing Michigan waters. More than 180 non-native pests, like zebra mussels and the round goby, endanger the native fish and plant populations so vital to recreational fishing. While most have arrived in the Great Lakes basin through the dumping of ballast water from ocean going vessels, boaters and anglers can help prevent further spread of fish diseases and other aquatic nuisance species by taking these precautions:

- ⚓ Thoroughly clean boats, trailers, nets and other equipment with a light bleach solution.
- ⚓ After cleaning, allow boats and equipment to dry in the sun for 4 to 6 hours.
- ⚓ Do not release live bait into any water body.
- ⚓ Do not move fish from one body of water to another.
- ⚓ Empty live wells and bilges when leaving the water to avoid transferring any of that water elsewhere.

Jelinek urges action to keep Asian Carp out of the Great Lakes

The Senate recently pressed for federal action to protect the Great Lakes from another potentially dangerous, and more physically imposing threat - the Asian Carp. Senate Resolution 15, adopted on April 17, urges the completion of a permanent barrier to keep two species of Asian carp (silver and bighead) out of the Great Lakes. Currently, a temporary barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal is all that is keeping them out of Lake Michigan.

Asian carp are ravenous feeders that compete with native fish and wildlife for food. In some of the pools along the Mississippi River, these carp species make up 90 percent of the total fish population. In addition, the leaping silver carp is a particular hazard to recreational boaters, causing injury and property damage.



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PERSONAL WATERCRAFT – fun but serious boating

With their speed, wave jumping capacity and sporty looks, personal watercraft (PWC) are a favorite for fun on the water. Yet what makes them exciting in the first place can also make them dangerous. It's important to remember that personal watercraft are not toys but high performance recreational boats. The U.S. Coast Guard offers these safety tips:

- Always attach engine shut-off lanyard.
- Never allow passengers to ride in front of the operator.
- Always stay clear of intake grate and water jet.
- Scan constantly for people, fixed objects and other watercraft.
- Be educated. Many PWC operators do not have formal training.

Michigan has special rules for PWC operators, including minimum age and life jacket requirements, boating safety certification, safe operating practices and more. Whether you rent or own a personal watercraft, make sure you know the law. Find out more in the boating handbook at www.boat-ed.com/mi/handbook.



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

BOATING

Handbook of Michigan Boating Laws and Responsibilities:

www.boat-ed.com/mi/handbook/

Harbor Reservations:

Call 1-800-447-2757

www.midnrreservations.com/index.cfm

Boating Access Sites:

www.mcgi.state.mi.us/MRBIS/

Boating Safety Classes:

www.dnr.state.mi.us/recnsearch/

FISHING

2006-2008 Michigan Fishing Guide:

<http://michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10364-137191--,00.html>

DNR Fisheries Division

517-373-1280

Weekly Fishing Report:

Call 1-517-373-0908

<http://michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10364-34956--,00.html>

Buy a Fishing License online:

www.mdnr-elicense.com/welcome.asp

Michigan Master Angler State Records:

www.michigandnr.com/MASTERANGLER/

Report a Poacher (RAP) Hotline:

1-800-292-7800

